

CLAIMS

1. A method for determining a regime to be applied to a connection in a communication system by means of which connections may be made to terminals associated with any of a plurality of operators, each terminal being addressable by means of a subscriber identity formatted to include a first field and a second field, the first field being, for at least some of the subscriber identities indicative of the operator with which a respective subscriber identity is associated, the method comprising:

transmitting to an operator determination function of the network a first message requesting a regime for a connection and including a subscriber identity field comprising an indication of the subscriber identity of the terminal that is to terminate the connection;

receiving the first message at the operator determination function;

determining by means of the operator determination function the operator to which the subscriber identity of the terminal that is to terminate the connection is assigned, and content of the first field that is associated with that operator;

forming at the operator determination function a modified subscriber identity having as its second field at least the content of the second field of the subscriber identity of the terminal that is to terminate the connection and having as its first field the said content of the first field that is associated with that operator;

forming a second message requesting a regime for a connection and including a subscriber identity field comprising the modified subscriber identity; and

transmitting the second message to a regime determination function arranged to analyse a subscriber identity received in a message requesting a regime for a connection to determine a regime based on the first field of the received subscriber identity.

2. A method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the regime is a tariff.

3. A method as claimed in claim 1, comprising:

transmitting together with the indication of the subscriber identity of the terminal that is to terminate the connection an indication of the type of the connection;

forming the second message so as to include the indication of the type of the connection; and

wherein the regime determination function is arranged to determine the regime based on the first field of the received subscriber identity and the indication of the type of the connection.

4. A method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the operator determination function has access to a first database that stores a list of subscriber identities and for each one an indication of the operator with which the respective subscriber identity is associated, and wherein the said determining step includes looking up the subscriber identity of the terminal that is to terminate the connection in the first database and retrieving any indication of an operator associated therewith in the first database.

5. A method as claimed in claim 4, wherein the indication of an operator is the said content of the first field that is associated with that operator.

6. A method as claimed in claim 4, wherein the operator determination function has access to a second database that stores a list of indicators of operators and for each one content of the first field that is associated with that operator, and the said determining step comprises looking up the said indication of an operator in the second database and retrieving content of the first field associated therewith.

7. A method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the subscriber identity field of the message requesting a regime for a connection does not include the first field of the subscriber identity of the terminal that is to terminate the connection.

8. A method as claimed in claim 1, wherein if in the said determining step it is determined that the content of the first field of the subscriber identity of the terminal is associated with the operator to which that subscriber identity is assigned, the second message requesting a regime for a connection is formed with its subscriber identity field comprising the subscriber identity unmodified.

9. A method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the messages are IDP messages.

10. A method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the messages are SIP INVITE messages.

11. A method as claimed in claim 1, wherein each subscriber identity is a telephone number.

12. A method as claimed in any claim 1, wherein each first field is an operator prefix.

13. A method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the regime determination function comprises one or more of a service control point (SCP) of an intelligent network (IN) and a service control function (SCF).

14. A method as claimed in claim 1, wherein each message requesting a regime for a connection comprises a source field for indicating the source of the message, the source field of the first message comprises an indication of the source of the first message and the source field of the second message comprises an indication of the source of the first message.

15. A method as claimed in claim 1, comprising:

the regime determination function determining a regime for the connection; and

applying the regime to the connection.

16. A method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the connection is a connection for transfer of data.

17. An operator determination function for use in determining a regime to be applied to a connection in a communication system by means of which connections may be made to terminals associated with any of a plurality of operators, each terminal being addressable by means of a subscriber identity formatted to include a first field and a second field, the first field being, for at least some of the subscriber identities indicative of the operator with which a respective subscriber identity is associated, the operator determination function comprising:

- an operator determination unit responsive to receiving a first message comprising an indication of the subscriber identity of the terminal that is to terminate the connection to determine the operator to which the subscriber identity of the terminal that is to terminate the connection is assigned, and content of the first field that is associated with that operator;

- an identity modifier arranged to receive the said content and form a modified subscriber identity having as its second field at least the content of the second field of the subscriber identity of the terminal that is to terminate the connection and having as its first field the said content of the first field that is associated with that operator;

- a message former arranged to receive the modified subscriber identity and form a second message requesting a regime for a connection and including a subscriber identity field comprising the modified subscriber identity; and

- a message transmitter for transmitting the second message to a regime determination function arranged to analyse a subscriber identity received in a message requesting a regime for a connection to determine a regime based on the first field of the received subscriber identity.